



Sweet Strangers by hit-or-miss-alyssa

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Summary: After the chaotic and tragic loss of their best friend, Katie Fitzgerald and Nancy Wheeler are just hoping to get through their last two years of Highschool. The last thing Katie expects is a memory from her past to show up. Will she be able to rekindle their friendship? Or has he changed too much? And will they survive what's to come? (Billy X OC)

1. Prologue

Hey guys! So I've been rewatching Stranger Things for the zillionth time and I can't seem to get this idea out of my head. It's just something I've needed to get out of my system. Anyways...here ya go!

Disclaimer: I do not own Stranger Things or any of the characters, just my OC and what I add into the story. This is the only time I'll be saying this.

PROLOGUE: California (Summer of 1979)

"Do you think we could live here someday?"

A loud pop of bubble gum sounded after the question was asked, along with the soft flow of waves heard in front of the three sunbathing girls.

"I think if we beg my parents maybe we could stay longer than just until the Fourth of July is over?", Nancy said, a hopeful questioning in her tone.

Katie scoffed and threw her head back in a laugh.

"Nance, all three of us know that if your dad misses more than a week of work he'll lose his mind.", She giggled and continued chewing on her gum.

The young girls laughed and agreed and simultaneously took a long sigh, staring out at the ocean before them. Never had Katie imagined she would be seeing the ocean. She'd seen ponds and lakes and pools, but nothing could catch her breath quite like the ocean could.

"Do you guys wanna go swimming?", Katie asked.

"Let's go!" Nancy stood up as fast as lightning and started sprinting toward the water, Katie and Barb not far behind. The girls laughed as they swam and splashed each other. Katie threw a wailing Nancy into the water while a bashful Barb watched and kept her distance, making sure there was no chance Katie could try and do the same

with her.

Besides, Barb knew without at doubt that Katie, however strong she was, would not be able to lift her.

"Ew! Mike! Get that away from us!" Nancy shrieked as Mike, Nancy's little brother and his friend Lucas, laughed as they waved a giant wad of seaweed at the girls and clearly had the intention of tossing it onto one of them.

"Mike! Lucas! Leave the girls alone!"

From the shore Katie heard Mrs. Wheeler scolding her youngest and his friend while she rubbed her swollen stomach growing with a new life. Mr. Wheeler was nose deep in a paper while he sat in his chair under the bright yellow umbrella that they had brought to the beach. The family that had graciously taken her on vacation with them was what one would call 'picturesque'. However, Katie knew better than to believe Nancy wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps of the dutiful housewife and mother of two soon to be three. But she couldn't help but love them, for they had taken her in as one of their own from the moment her, Nancy and Barbara had entered kindergarten.

Katie smiled at Mrs. Wheeler as she watched her grab Mike's arm to make him toss the seaweed aside. Beside him, Lucas was cackling manically.

"Ugh," Nancy scoffed, "He's such a dweeb."

"He's eight, Nancy, what do you expect from a boy?", Barb chimed in.

"I don't think there's a boy out there that *isn't* a dweeb," Katie added with a dramatic flair by promptly diving into the water. "But enough about boys, let's swim!"

And so, the girls went deeper into the water, riding the waves and enjoying the way the water made their fingers prune and how the salt was making their hair curlier than usual. Nancy was on the verge of having a full-blown afro.

"Girls!" Karen called from the shore after about an hour in the water.

"Come get some lunch!"

"We should get ice cream after," Katie said as they made their way back to the beach with wrinkly fingers and toes.

"Just remember no swimming for a full twenty minutes after we eat," Barb said with her knowing tone. She looked gravely at Katie who was notorious for breaking rules, even ones as silly as that.

"But there's only so much time before we have to leave and never see the ocean again!" She exclaimed, and Nancy laughed.

"I'm sure we'll come back. We're going to live here, right?"

"I'm sorry, did you want to *drown*?" Barb asked with a push of her glasses and a raise of her eyebrows.

"I'd rather *drown* here in beautiful California than *die* back in boring Hawkins, to be honest," Katie pointed at her and both of her friends rolled their eyes.

They knew all too well Katie was going to leave Hawkins and never look back someday. A part of them knew it was a running joke, but the other part knew that she was very serious and when the day did come the girls didn't know what they would do.

After a very delicious lunch of ham and cheese sandwiches, complete with chips and juice boxes, and watching disgustedly as Mike and Lucas kept chewing with their mouths open, Katie decided it was time for ice cream.

"C'mon the shack is right there!"

"We just ate! *How* can you eat any more?" Nancy asked, and Katie shrugged her sunburned shoulders.

There was no limit when it came to ice cream.

Barb looked like she wanted to indulge the cold, sticky sweetness as well but was too shy to admit it, lest her friends think she was eating too much.

"C'mon!", She said again and dragged her friends up off their sandy butts. She grabbed her small wallet from Mrs. Wheeler's bag and offered to buy her friends a treat. It was the least she could do with her allowance money, courtesy of her favorite and only uncle, Uncle Jim.

After Nancy ordered a vanilla soft serve and Barb got her orange sherbet the two went to sit on the bench across the boardwalk while they waited for Katie.

"Could I get chocolate chip with chocolate jimmies on a cone, please?" She asked politely and excitedly.

"Hey, that's my favorite!"

Katie turned to the new voice and behind her saw a blonde boy, about her age, with a tall blonde woman wearing a large sun hat. He was smiling at her and she smiled back.

"I thought I was the only one that liked it like that!" She laughed as the employee handed her the ice cream.

"Nope!" The boy said proudly and crossed his arms over his chest. "It's best with the chocolate jimmies because otherwise there's too much-,"

"Vanilla! Exactly!" Katie happily cut him off, which he didn't seem to mind as they both reveled in the fact that they shared similar tastes in the most delicious treat in the world.

His mother, next to him, smiled at the interaction between her son and this young girl.

"What's your name, Sweetie?" She asked.

"I'm Katherine, but everyone calls me Katie," Katie happily introduced herself as she carelessly licked her ice cream in front of this boy and his mom.

"I'm William, but everyone calls me Billy. It's kind of awesome having two names isn't it?" He asked, his eyes bright with excitement of meeting someone that shared so much with him in so little time.

"Very awesome, but I'm only called Katherine when I'm in trouble," She admitted, feeling her cheeks burn.

"That's okay, my mom does the same thing-hey!"

"Billy! I do not-," His mother laughed and ordered their ice cream as Katie and Billy talked some more.

Katie had to admit she was elated with the fact that she was making a friend in California, maybe they could stay in touch? Maybe she'd see him again when she left Hawkins and moved here?

"Where are your parents?" He asked.

"Oh, I'm here with my two best friends, they're over there-," She pointed to where Nancy and Barb were sitting on the same bench, facing the water. "I'm here with Nancy's family for the Fourth of July, we're on vacation." She explained.

"Oh-," He said, suddenly sad that this would probably be the first and last time he'd see Katie, this cool stranger that shared in his favorite ice cream combo. He always liked making new friends. His friends at school would probably be jealous he was talking to girl, as most twelve-year-old boys were. "-so, where are you from?"

"Hawkins, Indiana," She said with a large sigh, clearly indicating it was a boring corner of the world compared to where they both currently were. He smiled.

"Never heard of it, do you like it here?"

"I want to live here actually, I love the ocean."

"Maybe you'll move here someday-," He said with a shrug of his shoulder, licking his ice cream and enjoying the sweet mix of vanilla and the soft crunch of chocolate.

"I hope so-," She sighed again. "Do you want to meet my friends? I mean-," She looked over at Billy's mom, "-if that's okay?" She asked, hopeful.

She had a feeling Nancy and Barb would like Billy as much as she did

currently.

"Yes, that's okay, don't go wondering off though, Billy," She said and gave him a stern look. She reminded him there they were set up on the beach and he rolled his eyes telling her he wouldn't forget.

"C'mon!" Katie grabbed his hand which he didn't mind but he tried to make the burning of his cheeks go away anyway.

"Guys! This is Billy!" Katie introduced after jogging to her friends.

The red head and the brunette turned to see the new member of their small party and smiled as they introduced themselves.

"Nice to meet you guys-," He said, "-Heard you were from Indiana?"

"As boring as it is, yes, we are," Nancy said.

"Are you guys staying for the fireworks? They usually have a pretty awesome show on the pier, it's only a five-minute walk."

"Yeah we're staying for them, I don't think I could drag Katie away from the beach if I tried," Nance nudged Katie's shoulder and Katie laughed, agreeing with her.

"Are you from around here?" Barb asked the blonde-haired stranger.

Barb was always the practical one, she knew not to talk to strangers however nice they may seem. Billy was around their age that was sure, but you never knew someone's intentions until it was too late.

"Yeah, I live about twenty minutes from here with my Mom-," He paused. "And Dad. But he hates the beach, so I usually come here with just my mom. I'm a pretty decent surfer." He said and threw a proud look over to Katie which she returned with a smile.

"I've *always* wanted to learn how to surf!" She exclaimed.

"Katie...I don't know if that's a good-,"

"I think it sounds kind of fun," Nancy cut Barb off, but not after giving her an apologetic look while Barb just glared at her.

"Could you teach us?" Katie asked Billy and his blue eyes lit up with excitement.

His friends were *definitely* going to be jealous.

"Of course, but it takes some practice, you guys up for it?"

"Yeah-," Nancy smiled and Katie winked at her.

Because duh, who didn't want to learn how to surf from a cute California boy?

Barbara gave a reluctant sigh.

"Fine, but if you guys get injured don't say I didn't warn you."

"You did pretty good for your first time on a surfboard-," Billy slid up next to Katie who was currently wrapping herself in a towel. After falling off the board at least twelve times she managed to stand on it all of one time to ride a small wave before promptly falling off again. Billy had helped her gain her balance. Billy was sweet, and Katie knew without a doubt she liked him. Who wouldn't? Nancy had whispered to her of how cute he was, and Barb had said she liked how he never laughed at her for falling off the board. "And as congratulations I got something for you." He smiled innocently as he held something behind his back.

"If that's a dead crab or seaweed or something I'm sorry but Nancy's little brother already has you beat. He threw those at us like two hours ago-," Katie laughed, and Billy just smiled.

Unknown to Katie, Nancy and Barbara were exchanging whispers of how Billy clearly liked her and couldn't wait to tell her later when he wasn't around.

"Nope-," He held out his hand, "-it's sea glass."

Katie gasped at the pretty trinket in his hand and reached for it. It was a pale blue color and relatively small, about the size of a pendant on a necklace, but she could clearly see the wear and tear from the sea and once again marveled at how incredible the ocean was.

"It's beautiful!" She exclaimed and held it up to the sun to see how much color it actually had.

"There's tons of it on the beach, just have to have a good eye. Plus, blue is pretty rare I think-," He stammered and blushed at how excited she was, happy that his gift had caused such a reaction.

"Thank you so much, Billy, I love it." Katie beamed at him and he blushed again giving her a bashful smile.

"Good, yeah, that's good-," He hesitated in his next question but took a deep breath and asked anyway. The worst she could say was no. "Also, I was wondering if you and your friends and your family wanted to watch the fireworks with me and my mom?"

"Oh, yeah let me ask-hey Nancy!" She called her friends over and asked what Billy had just asked her. Nancy shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't see why not, we've already been hanging out."

Once Nancy asked her parents if they could watch the fireworks with them and they agreed, Billy felt his chest flutter as he happily smiled at Katie. Katie was grinning back at him, very happy that she got to spend more time with him.

"Do you think I'll ever see him again?" Katie clutched her sea glass in her hand, sighing wistfully as she remembered sitting next to Billy watching the beautiful red, white and blue fireworks light up across the sky. He had talked to her about living in California and how he loved how it was never cold and that he could go to the beach whenever he wanted. The only thing he wished he could see in real life was snow.

He had never seen it and wondered what it was like seeing the world turn white and fluffy.

"You're not missing much." She had told him. She hated snow. She much preferred where he lived.

He had laughed and once the fireworks were over he gave her a shy hug and a sad goodbye. And that was that.

"Probably not," Barb said, reasonably.

Nancy gave her a look and Barb just shrugged.

"I think he liked you-," Nancy whispered to Katie in the back seat of the wagon. She didn't want her parents to hear; she knew her mom would never stop asking questions if they caught wind of Billy liking Katie. "-like...*liked* you liked you."

"He did not!" Katie gasped quietly, and Nancy and Barb giggled and nodded to her.

"Well since I'll never see him again I guess I can admit he was very nice and cute-," She giggled and all three girls continued to gossip about Katie's Billy for the rest of their trip.

Katie hoped for more reasons than one that Billy would some day be able to see snow.

2. Chapter One

Just to let you guys know (if any of you are reading, that is) I have no set schedule for this story, I'm literally just writing as it comes. Words are pouring out of me at this point and I hope it doesn't stop lol, anyways...enjoy chapter one!

CHAPTER ONE: Katherine

"Jonathan, I swear to god if you don't stop messing with that thing I'm going to do much worse to it than Steve did last year." Katie huffed as she clutched her steering wheel, still listening to Jonathan tinkering over his camera. The noise was just too loud, and she wasn't in the mood to deal with it without at least one cup of coffee in her hand.

"I'm sorry Katie but something's caught in-Aha!" He shouted as he finally unclogged or uncorked or whatever it was he did to his camera, and Katie nearly pulled over to make him walk to school.

"Sorry,-" He chuckled and gave her a bashful look as she glared at him with eyes of steel.

"We need to make a coffee stop, ASAP."

"Aye, aye, Captain Morgan," He saluted her, and she continued to glare at him.

She had decided that she would indulge in some vices last night and instantly regretted it this morning when she woke up at six AM for school. She had picked up Jonathan and he had immediately seen the red rimmed eyes and the fatigued look on her face which was a sure-fire sign of a hangover. But she couldn't help it, sometimes it helped with the nightmares.

She shuttered just thinking about it. Thinking about it brought back the gnawing guilt and pain of losing Barb. Of losing her hold on the reality of her world. Of losing her sense of safe. And that was

something she couldn't deal with so alcohol was her answer.

"You know I'm teasing, right?" He asked, and she looked over at him seeing the guilt in his eyes at bringing it up subliminally. They both knew it wasn't something they discussed unless necessary.

"Of course, still sucks though," She sighed again and slumped back in the driver's seat, speeding to the nearest coffee shop.

After making a pit stop and ordering a large coffee with cream only- Katie needed it a little bitter to make her pounding head get back to normal- and a tea for Jonathan, they finally made their way to Hawkins Highschool. She parked in her usual spot and watched the bland teen crowd of Hawkins roll in to sulk a little before their first period. She spotted Steve in the spot behind her and in his passenger seat, sat her best friend, Nancy Wheeler. Katie guessed by the way their heads were ducked that they were going over that personal essay Steve had been having trouble with for his college applications. She knew the due date was tomorrow and she knew the sweet but slightly dumb goofus was hopeless when it came to meshing his jumbled thoughts together to create anything coherent. Nance was his only hope at this point.

"I'm going to head inside, get to the red room before anyone can claim it, you coming?"

"Nah, I'm gonna stay here a few, maybe let my hangover settle before I have to make it worse by reading whatever it is Mr. Dearburn is going to make us suffer through today," Katie said and gave Jonathan a small wave as he tried to gently shut her door to spare her aching head and headed into the school. She pressed her cassette into the tape player in her car and let The Clash slowly bring her back to normalcy. She knew she shouldn't have drank so much but with the night she had had, she didn't know what else to do. She knew it was a dangerous road to be on and she knew better than anyone what it could do to a person but with her growing anxiety and constantly being alone it drove her to the bottle. Not that that was an excuse, but it did help with those nightmares. And she knew she could confide in Nancy or Steve or Jonathan, or even the kids, but she didn't want to burden them any more than she already knew they were. *Especially* the kids.

Katie's thoughts were cut off by the most head pounding noise in her delicate state and she groaned aloud before turning to see what the commotion was. No one in Hawkins drove anything that could elicit such a sound and she wanted to know who she was going to have to punch for ruining her peace.

She looked over at the loud revving engine of a blue Chevy Camaro and scrunched her nose up at the newcomer.

Because clearly that's what it was, a new kid coming to enter the Hell that was Hawkins Highschool. Poor bastard. Katie watched as the passenger door opened and out stepped a red headed girl with a skateboard. She already looked like she didn't want to be there and it nearly made Katie laugh as she could relate to such a feeling. And from the driver's side door came the other new kid. Tall, dirty blonde mullet and dressed in denim from head to toe with a cigarette hanging out of the corner of his mouth. God, she wished she had a cigarette right now. Her head could sure use some nicotine.

The new kid took one look around the parking lot and snarled his upper lip, clearly disliking what he saw. Katie couldn't blame him. If only he knew the real horrors of Hawkins. She watched as he threw his half finished cigarette on the ground and stomped it out with his boot. He then made his way toward the admissions office at the entrance of the school. Katie sighed and decided that six fifty was pushing it and she was going to be late if she didn't get out of her car. So, with one final huff she grabbed her bag and tightened her flannel around her slight frame. October in Hawkins was *cold* and she was sure she would hear it from Nance that she should "just invest in a damned jacket for Christ's sake."

"Hey Katie!" Nancy's voice carried over to her from the parking lot and she ran to her, linking her sweater clad arm into her friends flannelled one.

"Did you see that? New kid looked mad to be here already and he hasn't even said a word to anyone-," Katie said, and Nancy nodded her head but didn't seem too concerned with the newcomer. Steve came over then offering to carry Nancy's and Katie's bags.

"Wow, Harrington, look at you being all gentlemanly-," Katie gushed

and Steve rolled his eyes. "How's that essay going?"

Nancy tensed next to her friend and gave her a warning look, but Steve had already sighed and shook his head.

"Not good, Fitz. Not too good." He groaned, and Katie laughed.

"When are you going to start calling me Katie?"

"When are you going to start calling me Steve?"

They bantered back and forth as they made their way inside and Nancy laughed. They were usually like this and it made her smile that her best friend and boyfriend could get along so well.

"Okay but at least I call you by your entire last name." Katie pointed out.

"Yeah but Fitzgerald just doesn't have the same ring to it as-..." He paused for dramatic effect, "-*Fitz*, ya know?"

In reply all Katie did was laugh. Sure, Harrington was the only one allowed to call her Fitz; and got forbid anyone ever call her *Katherine*, so she let it slide.

Katie wasn't surprised that by second period the whole school was buzzing about the new kid and his fancy car and-and this is according to Carol, Tina, and Beth-his sexy ass. So far all she knew was that the kids names was Billy. She'd known a kid named Billy once when she was younger, but he was just a fond memory now.

"Hey Fitz, you seen Nancy?" Steve came rolling up to her as she swapped out her books for her next class.

"No, she's probably heading this way though, she had Mr. Jennings this morning-," She said and laughed as Steve pouted. "Relax Harrington, it's only been a hour since you last swapped spit."

"An hour too long!" He complained.

Just then there was the unmistakable sound of what could only be squealing girls gushing down the hall and Katie and Steve turned to

see what the commotion was. The new kid, Billy, was walking down the hall with nothing but a smirk on his face as he surveyed the halls of Hawkins, clearly checking out what he had to work with. His eyes briefly landed on Katie and Steve but quickly left, his attention drawn to more important people supposedly.

"Clearly we didn't make the cut, Harrington," Katie sighed with false disappointment.

"What ever are we going to do without Billy mullet?" He asked dramatically, and Katie snorted, noting that his blonde mullet was quite the sight, indeed.

"I don't know, I think I might die."

"Hey guys, what's going on?" Nancy's sweet voice rang over the halls and Steve grinned and grabbed her pulling her for a sweet kiss. Katie gagged.

"Jeez, keep it in your pants!" She said and Nancy blushed while Steve chuckled.

"Ready for second period?" Nancy asked and Katie sighed, nodding.

She hated school in general, though she tried her best considering getting good grades was the only way she was going to get into a good college far, far away from this place, and even though first period always made her want to crawl back into her warm bed, she was grateful she had Nancy in second so that she at least had her best friend to talk to.

"I think that new kid is in our class," Nancy said, sounding a bit nervous.

"No, he's a senior like me, he's a dick as well-," Steve told the two girls and Katie raised an eyebrow.

"How could you possibly know that, maybe he's just shy. Hawkins isn't the most welcoming of places either." She pointed out reasonably.

Steve thought for a moment and after some contemplation spoke

again.

"Nah, he's just a dick."

Once Katie and Nancy had made their way to second period Bio and chosen their seats Mrs. Halloway had everyone settle down before she introduced the new kid, Billy. He had sat in the back already and Katie heard a low groan before he got up at the head of the class.

"Everyone, this is our new student all the way from sunny California, William-

"Billy."

There was a tense silence over the class as Billy's deep voice cut Mrs. Halloway off and she stuttered slightly at his interruption.

"Uh-yes, Billy Hargrove-," She paused and smiled at the class. "-Be sure to give him a nice big welcome to Hawkins, okay?"

Katie, for some unknown reason, had tensed. She looked at Billy harder now, trying to see similarities in this boy nearly a man from the young happy boy she had met long ago. If she squinted right she could see the same nose, same jaw line, though then it had been rounded with youth. And he certainly had the same striking blue eyes that the boy in her mind had. But this boy was very different. He was filled with an anger Katie could clearly see was rooted deep into his soul. His eyes were hard and full of hatred and she had never seen someone look so unhappy. Well, besides maybe herself.

She watched as he looked at the class with disdain. His eyes were calculated, observing people and she could see he was intelligent, but she doubted he would put it toward school. No, his intelligence lied beyond Hawkins Highschool bio and any other subject they had to offer him. As he took his seat Katie saw most, if not all the girls gawking at him, herself included but for a completely different reason.

Could that really be my Billy? From the summer of 1979?

She doubted it, it was too weird of a coincidence.

Besides, there were plenty of lookalikes in the world. And her Billy would never have a scowl on his face like this one had. But still something didn't sit right with her and it stayed in the pit of her stomach for the remainder of the day.

Once school had ended Nancy and Steve bid her a goodbye and Jonathan had told her she could leave without him if she wanted; he wanted to print some of the new photos he'd taken of his mother and brother at the end of August when they had taken their family camping trip. But she decided she'd stay, she hated the thought of leaving him stranded. So, she sat on the hood of her car, book in her hand trying and failing to read the latest chapter that Mr. Dearburn had assigned them. If she was being honest with herself she couldn't focus because of the new kid. She couldn't get it out of her mind that he was the same one she'd met when she was twelve or so. She sighed and stared at the blue Camaro. It was empty, save for a pack of cigarettes on the passenger side seat and a blue Little Trees air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror. The license plate even said California.

"Is that any good?"

Katie jumped out of her skin at the sound of a new voice and dropped her book in the process.

"*Jesus!* Warn a girl next time, would you?" She groaned and picked up her book; straightening up she stood face to face with the current star of her thoughts.

He smirked and gave a small chuckle.

"Didn't meant to scare you. My name is-."

"Billy, yeah Mrs. Halloway introduced you and it's all anyone can talk about over the school at the moment." Katie shot back, irritated that Billy had just shown up and scared the living daylights out of her. With all she'd been through she would've thought she wouldn't be scared so easily.

"Oh so you know me then?" He asked, a challenge in his tone.

"Nope-," She said, "-just the name."

"And what's yours?"

"Katie."

He paused and gave an apprehensive sound as he nodded slowly. He was doing that thing again, calculating her, she could tell he was reading her every movement and facial expression and it almost made her nervous.

"Was there something I could help you with, Billy?" She asked, a tone of sarcasm dripping in her voice. He smirked again and leaned against her car.

"Are you always this serious, Katie?" He asked, prodding at her and she sighed, rolling her eyes. She could tell he was just trying to get a rise out of her, god knew why, he had plenty of other girls that would fawn over him. All she wanted to know was if he was the same Billy from her memory and if not he was free to leave.

"Afraid so. Might as well move onto the next one then, huh?" She raised an eyebrow at him as he gave what she could assume was a genuine laugh.

"You're not exactly how I remember you."

"Yeah well-," She paused, caught off guard. "-What did you just say?"

"I said-," He took a step closer to her and reached out. She nearly backed away until she saw him reach for her wrist. Her wrist that had a silver bracelet on it with a beautiful piece of blue sea glass as the centerpiece; one that she had made herself when she was younger. "-You're not exactly how I remember you, *Katherine*."

Katie gasped as he said this and not nearly a second went by when the same red headed girl from this morning came skateboarding to Billy's car. He gave her a mischievous grin as he backed away towards his own car, ripping open the driver's side and barely letting the red head shut the door before speeding out of the school parking lot.

Katie's heart was racing.

There was no way it could be the same Billy, *no way*, and yet he knew her name! Like her *real* name, her name that no one besides Nancy, her family and possibly Steve knew.

How in the world did my Billy end up in Hawkins? And more importantly...is he even the same Billy?

Yay! Billy's been introduced! Now, it's been about 5 years since they've seen each other and clearly a lot has happened. They're not exactly the happy-go-lucky kids they were when they met. So throughout the story we'll get to delve into the changes and maybe see if they can be friends again? Who knows! (I do...) Thanks for reading!

-Alyssa

3. Chapter Two

Hey guys! Here's another one! More Billy in this chapter and honestly I'm excited to write these two together a lot because its...steamy and it's not even getting to the good parts yet lol enjoy!

CHAPTER TWO: The Library

"You sure you're okay?"

Katie nearly had the heart to tell Jonathan that no, she wasn't okay. She was having a semi panic attack knowing that the new kid that clearly had anger issues was the same kid from her past that she met once and yet could never forget. How was she supposed to explain that though?

"Yeah-," She said instead with a soft smile toward her friend. "-I'm fine, thanks Jonathan."

He gave her a skeptical look and she rolled her eyes at his concern, though it wasn't wrongly placed.

"Really, I'm fine. I just want to get to the library and then go straight home." She tried to sound convincing and he gave her a deadpanned look.

Clearly he could see right through the act but Jonathan being Jonathan knew when not to push it.

"Fine, but call me if you wanna talk about whatever is going on. Thanks again for the ride." He said and he shut her car door while giving her another one of his infamous looks. She sighed.

"Not like I could tell you any way, my friend..." She muttered as she watched him stroll into his small house. She saw Joyce's car parked out front so that probably meant Will was home as well. She hoped he was doing well. Poor kid had been through too much. And then as always thoughts of Will brought up gnawing thoughts of Barbara.

Katie felt her chest tighten at the thought and she tried her best to ignore her throat closing with the threat of tears.

Oh Barb...I miss you so much...

She sighed once more, pushing away thoughts of her red headed friend and decided it was time to drive to the library to drop off a couple of the books her father needed to return. And if she was being honest with herself, she kind of liked spending time there because of the peace and quiet. More often than not she found herself there after school just to bask in the sweet silence. She was at the library in a short time, taking the steps two at a time, eager to sit at one of the desks and let her jumbled thoughts align. Once she had returned the books with a thankful glance from the librarian and chose a desk to sit at she gave a long sigh and brought out one of her books from school. The same book which had dropped out of her hands when Billy had snuck up on her in the parking lot only about thirty minutes ago.

Katie felt her face scrunching up in confusion.

How was it that the world was so small that she was reunited with someone she had had girlish fantasies about? Billy had been so sweet and kind and one of the first boys she hadn't thought was a moron and she remembered clearly Barb saying she would probably never see him again. She had agreed but that hadn't stopped her young mind from hoping and wondering if they would have a chance meeting again. She had thought maybe she'd go out to California to try and pursue her not so natural gift at surfing and she'd see him paddling over to her with a bright smile and another piece of sea glass. Or maybe she thought they'd both end up at the same college, obviously somewhere in California, because he seemed just as bright as her and she had assumed they would be in all the same classes and they would be the best of friends. She had also, foolishly, imagined him being her first kiss. But that was a normal girl thing to think about and besides...that ship had sailed a long time ago. Though she knew her young heart would be upset it wasn't him. With all these thoughts running through her head she almost didn't pick up on the two voices over by the front desk. One male and annoyed, and the other female and sounding meek.

"I'm sorry okay, I don't want to buy the books and this is the only place my teacher said had them."

"Yeah well, sorry to tell you this Max, but it's gonna cost you. Gas isn't cheap, you know."

Katie perked her ears up at the voices and knew without a doubt it was Billy and the red headed girl she had seen him with. He sounded annoyed, as he did earlier in class and Katie felt bad for the red head, Max, as he called her.

"But Billy I just said I didn't want to buy the books, what makes you think I can cough up gas money?" She asked, clearly outraged.

"I don't care, Max, but you're going to whether you like it or not." His tone was final and Katie heard Max groan. Chancing a peak around the corner sure enough, she saw Billy in the same outfit he'd had on at school, denim, denim and more denim. Max had a green sweatshirt on, making her hair look even brighter than it already was. They were both glaring at each other and Katie had to give it to Max, she was holding her own against Billy's terrifying glare. Bright blue eyes or not that boys glare could put someone ten feet under.

"Go find the damned books, Max, we leave in ten minutes if you're not ready then so be it." He growled at her and she pinched her lips and huffed as she turned and stalked off into the small library for her books, clearly having lost that staring match. Billy took a deep breath and Katie watched as he exhaled, seemingly to release the tension from his body. This was the perfect opportunity, Katie realized with her presence being unknown, to start analyzing this new Billy. He was tall, long legs with a broad body. Hair unruly and curly which sat atop his head in a signature mullet, which oddly seemed to fit his whole demeanor. When she had met him when they were both adolescents his hair had been curly and a lighter shade of blonde, and definitely not in a mullet. Now it was darker but still considered blonde, very curly, and styled exactly how she imagined he wanted it to be. But it still looked good. She noticed he was playing with his hands, looking them over as if to see if they had any marks on them or something. She wondered if he surfed still. Maybe surfing gave people rough hands and he missed holding a surf board. Or maybe it was just a habit he had. Just as she was about to go over to where he

was and start her in depth and on the spot interrogation Billy turned and spotted her first.

Well there goes that plan...

His eyebrows shot up in true surprise and he had smirk on his face before Katie could even try and hide herself. She inwardly groaned and begrudgingly pulled out the chair next to her as he strolled over to her with a confidence she had never before seen in anyone. He stalked over to her like he had just found money on the street. Or had just mugged someone for it. Either way, he was gleeful at seeing her.

"Well, well, well stalking me already, Katherine?" He spoke to her as if they were the best of friends and Katie had to admit it wasn't exactly what she had imagined when she was younger. It was more arrogant. And much less sweet than she hoped.

"Ugh, don't call me that-," She scrunched up her face in disgust at her full name, "-and for your information I was here first. So looks to me like it might be the other way around." She raised her eyebrow and he chuckled and shook his head, taking the seat next to her by sitting in the chair backwards, arms perched against the back rest. His legs were so long they stretched nearly to her side of the desk, his ankle brushing hers. She subtly moved her foot away.

"Damn you caught me, couldn't help myself." He smiled lazily, a denim clad arm lifting to rest his cheek on his fist as he looked at her. She chuckled despite herself and rolled her eyes.

"Oh I'm sure. I'm hard to resist," She flipped her hair over her shoulder for dramatic flair. He stared at her for a moment, looking at her hair she'd just tossed over her shoulder, looking down her body with an appreciative nod of his head which in turn had her cheeks blossoming a pink tint on her face, and finally he was looking at her face, gauging her reaction to his next words.

"Hard to forget, too."

She felt her breath catch in her throat, and yes she knew it was irrational to still be surprised that he was the same Billy from her memory but he just confirmed it yet again, in less than two hours and

it was proving difficult to wrap her mind around it.

"Um..." She struggled to find words and watched as his mouth quirked up once again, clearly enjoying her squirm under his intense stare. "Yeah, small world I guess." She finally mumbled, feeling lame and not very smart, and he nodded slowly, blue eyes blazing.

"Not that small..." He leaned back in his chair, looking at her with a knowing look. One that said he wasn't as surprised to see her as she was to see him.

"Oh? You mean it's not a weird coincidence that you *happened* to move to the town I live in after we met once five or six years ago?" She asked, her tone implying that was exactly that she thought. He shrugged.

"As soon as my old man said the name Hawkins I knew I'd see you. Unless you had moved which was unlikely, seeing as small-town people rarely leave their small towns. Too comfortable with where they are. Humans are creatures of habit after all." He said and not to subtly looked to the bracelet which was clad against her wrist. She felt her face heating up and she shifted, lowering her arm under the desk and away from his gaze. She felt her heart racing in her chest at the conversation and in the back of her head never would have imagined sitting here in the library in Hawkins, Indiana with Billy.

"You're awfully knowledgeable about small towns and their inhabitants," She countered, finding her defenses rising at his all-knowing tone. She hated being taken by surprise and he certainly had done the job.

"Not much to do but read about the shit town you're moving to when you're traveling across the states to get there." He shrugged again and she laughed.

"Well at least you understand what I meant when I said I wanted to move to California now."

"Let's be honest Katherine, who wouldn't want to move to The Golden State?"

"Okay, hold it-," She held her hand up to him which only made him grin wider. "-Who gave you permission to call me Katherine? Because, um, it sure as hell wasn't me."

He laughed and nodded, looking thoughtful of his next sentence. She could only imagine how calculated his words were, if they all had a hidden meaning behind them. She knew he wasn't stupid, he knew exactly what he was saying and how to say it. And honestly it was making Katie dizzy. She liked it, the thrill.

"If I remember correctly you told me you were only called Katherine when you were being bad..." He let his sentence trail off, leaving suggestive endings in its wake.

"You think I'm being *bad*?" Her voice was near a whisper, heart pounding in her ears. Billy leaned forward, inching closer to her face. She could smell cigarettes on his breath and maybe mints, failing to cover the bitter smell. And his cologne was suddenly engulfing her senses as well, choking her and thrilling her all at the same time.

"No, not yet. But I intend on seeing you be bad around *me*."

"Billy! Let's go, I'm ready."

Katie jumped at the sound of Max's voice over by the reception desk and Billy himself was still seated very close to her, smiling at her and looking as though he had just won something. She shook her head slightly and backed away, keeping a distance from herself and this devilishly sly talker. Who even was he anymore? Clearly not the sweet, bashful Billy she remembered.

"See you at school, Katherine." He winked and got up off the chair, heading towards the desk where Max was.

Katie didn't even have the energy to say the same to him as he walked out of the library. She was still sitting in stunned silence when she heard a Camaro rev its engine outside.

"Hey Dad, I'm home."

Katie walked through her door and tossed her keys onto the entrance

table, hearing the TV blasting in the living room. It was only around five PM but she was sure she knew what she'd find in the living room. Carefully and quietly she made her way through the kitchen into the living room where her father was passed out, neck arched all the back on the back of the couch, remote in one hand, beer bottle in the other. She took a glance at the table and counted.

Not too bad tonight.

She picked up the 7 empties as quietly as she could without clinking them together and put them on the kitchen counter, making sure to make a note and bring them down to the recycler for the bottle deposit eventually. She strolled back into the living room and took the remote from her father's hand, turning the volume down. He was watching his favorite show, Charlie Chaplin reruns. Or rather, he had been before he passed out. A tv dinner was in front of him, half eaten and probably cold. She sighed and threw a small throw blanket on top of him, his soft snores resonating through the house. She turned the fan on, knowing he liked the rhythmic hum of it sometimes and went into the kitchen throwing the tv dinner in the fridge. Maybe he'd heat it up later when he woke up. Katie cleaned up a bit more before settling in her room, opening her backpack and started on her homework. While she was delving into the not so magical world of Bio, she found her mind running over her encounter with Billy.

She could barely believe that he was the same kid.

I mean yeah, people change as they get older but not that much right?

First and foremost, he was rude. Point blank. He'd been rude to Mrs. Hallowsay, he'd been rude to that Max girl, whom she was still curious of and what their relation was to each other. He'd been cocky the entire time he was speaking to her, like he knew so much more than her and had her under his spell. He'd given nasty glares to her and Harrington earlier as well.

And yet.

He had still remembered her.

He'd said she was "hard to forget".

That must mean there's some semblance of the same kid in there, right?

She sighed and tried her hardest to ignore the probing thoughts. She needed to focus on her homework. The phone rang then and she took it as a blessing in disguise. Finally something to distract her. She went over to her small desk and picked up the land line, trying hard not to tangle it more than it already was and hoping the loud ringing hadn't woken up her dad.

"Hello?"

"Hey, it's me."

"Oh, hey Nance, what's up?"

"Just reminding you of our dinner tomorrow night. Plus I kind of wanted to vent a little."

"Of course I didn't forget-," Katie sighed and looked at her calendar, October 25th circled in blue highlighter with a reminder of her monthly dinner with Barb's parents. Nancy and her had made the decision to continue to visit them and let them know they hadn't forgotten their third member of their small party. "-wouldn't miss it for the world."

"Good. I hate going alone. Brings up bad memories."

"Brings up bad memories either way, but I understand what you mean," She sighed and leaned back in her desk chair, twirling the phone cord without even meaning to. Guess she'd never get it untangled. Oh well.

"True..."

"What did you want to vent about?"

"Steve."

Nancy's tone implied she wanted to do more than just *vent* about Steve and Katie winced. Nancy's tone implied she wanted to *deal* with Steve, which in her world meant one thing. She had known this time would come eventually but she hadn't thought it was come so soon.

Poor Harrington, she had just started to like him.

"You're gonna break up with him aren't you?"

"What! No! I-I just...I don't know what to do. I feel like I'm in a complete slump. You get it don't you?"

"Oh...well that's interesting...-." She was genuinely surprised she had said she didn't want to break up with Steve and she hoped it wasn't too clear in her voice. "-and yeah, I do-," She said and once again felt her throat closing with emotion. The memory of Barb and their strong friendship coming rushing into her head. Katie would never forgive herself for leaving her to face that stupid party while Nancy pursued Steve. "-But we can't change what happened Nance, you know that."

"I know, I know. I just wish..." Nancy trailed off, and Katie could hear the emotion building up behind her voice as well.

"Wish there was a way we could let people know?" Katie said softly. She didn't know who could be tapping in on their conversation and she certainly didn't want any of those men in dark suits with superior attitudes catching wind of their conversation.

"Careful, Katie." Nancy warned, her tone serious but wistful in agreeance with her.

"I know, Nance. I know." She sighed again and listened to her friend do the same. "But what does this have to do with Steve? I thought you two were good?"

"We are, I just...don't know. I don't know. It's like he wants to forget and I can't let that happen. We can't let that happen, Katie."

"Look, Harrington may be a dummy, but he cares about your feelings Nancy. I'm sure he doesn't want to forget. Just talk to him. He's at least a good listener, right?"

"Yeah, you're right. Sorry. I'm being stupid. Is there anything on your mind? Might distract me from my own thoughts if you had problems too."

Katie bit her bottom lip, contemplating whether she should burden

her best friend with her current line of thoughts. Nancy wouldn't be able to believe Billy Hargrove of Hawkins was the same Billy from California and maybe Katie could vent about that with her. But just as she was about to start telling her everything Nancy cut her off.

"Actually, Katie I'm sorry to do this but my mom just called for dinner. I'll see you at school tomorrow, yeah?"

"Uh-," Katie frowned slightly before nodding. "-Yeah. See you then."

"Love you."

"Love you too Nance. Goodnight."

And they hung up.

And it left Katie even more put off then she was before. What was she supposed to do? She couldn't tell Nancy, she had way too much on her plate at the moment with Steve. And talking to Billy himself wasn't an option. He would just make her unfocused and even more confused than she already was.

What was a girl to do?

Yes what is a girl to do indeed? Poor Katie, so confused. Might do some Billy point of views throughout the story as well! Let me know if that's something you guys would want! Thanks for reading!

-Alyssa

4. Chapter Three

Hey guys! Here's another one for you! Short but sweet, and don't worry we'll be getting to the good stuff soon. We're going to have Katie attending that Halloween party everyone loves and it should be fun! Anyways, here you are! Enjoy!

CHAPTER THREE: The Dinner

"Do you think Harrington ever pictures himself as a professional basketball player?"

"I don't think so..."

"Good, cause if I have to watch him get pushed over by the new kid one more time, and they're *only* in tryouts, *I'm* gonna have to break the bad news to him because you are too nice."

Katie and Nancy were currently sitting on the small bleacher section of the gym at the school watching, and sometimes wincing, as Steve tried out for the basketball team this year. He made it every year but Katie was having a hard time believing why. She was pretty sure the coach just had limited kids to pick from but she had heard through the rumor mill that Harrington was actually pretty good.

This tryout was not doing him justice.

And of course it had something to do with that fact that Billy was also trying out for the team and he was playing like he had something to lose. Also it might've just been her but she was pretty sure he was trying to show off.

"I'm sure he's aware he's..." Nancy paused, trying to find the right words. "-being put the test today."

Katie chuckled and shook her head, continuing to watch. Steve had asked Nancy if she wanted to watch him try out this year and she had agreed on the condition that Katie also attend lest she be left alone to

watch sweaty testosterone filled boys throwing a ball around. Katie had agreed, not minding spending time with her friend but if she had known she would be watching a dog fight she might've not come. Billy was brutal in every sense of the word. He was quick on his feet and a fast thinker and one could barely follow what his next move was going to be but she guessed that's what made for a good player. She watched as the boys ran down the opposite end of the court, Billy ahead with the ball bouncing up and down in his hands. Steve was close behind taking a leap to try and block the shot but Billy was too quick for him and passed it to another boy, who took the shot.

Katie heard the swish of the net from where she was sitting.

Billy let out a victory howl and Steve stood there panting with his hands on his hips, a look of annoyance and disappointment on his face. Billy exchanged a few words with Steve and Katie saw Steve glaring at him as Billy himself looked towards where Nancy and herself were seated. Steve pushed by him and glared at the floor while Billy smirked, watching him stomp away. Billy looked back over towards the bleachers and gave a lazy smile to Katie and winked.

Ugh, that's not gonna get annoying or anything...

"Did he just wink at you?" Nancy asked.

"Yup."

"Why?"

"Because he's annoying."

Nancy didn't say anything after that and knew that if Katie wanted to talk about it she would.

"You know what's weird? He reminds me of that kid we met on vacation, do you remember him?"

Katie snorted and looked over at her friend.

"Didn't take long for you to guess that."

Nancy raised an eyebrow at her and Katie returned the gesture until realization struck her face and Katie felt simultaneous relief and also dread at the knowledge her friend had just acquired. Relief, because she wouldn't have to be the one to tell her anymore because she already knew, and dread because Nancy knew exactly how long Katie had thought about that sweet boy from California after they'd parted ways. And she also knew that this boy was not the same and it was probably throwing her friend into a frenzy of emotions, much like herself.

If only you knew Nance...

"Wait...what the hell?" Nancy exclaimed, and Katie noticed her mouth had a hard time closing, aghast with the information she'd just received.

"My reaction exactly."

"*That's* Billy? Like, cool, surfer kid that liked you when we were kids, Billy?"

Katie chuckled as she continued to watch Billy get the best of Steve on the basketball court. Poor kid looked like he wanted to crawl into the nearest hole, but Katie knew Harrington's sense of pride would force him to continue playing, whether he won or not.

And in this case, it was not.

"Well, we don't know if he liked me, but even if he did back then it makes no difference now. He's..." Katie chanced a glance at Billy, shirtless and sweating and panting from playing so hard. He certainly was a sight to see. "-clearly not the same kid."

"That's for sure. Wow talk about small world though. It feels like yesterday he was teaching us how to surf." Nancy's tone had taken on a nostalgic essence mixed in with a bit of disappointment. She wondered how that nice kid could turn into such a stereotype so quickly, but she shrugged her shoulders. People changed. She definitely had.

Katie was tired of watching this pitiful excuse for a tryout and before

she could even turn to look at her friend and begin to beg that she be allowed to leave Nancy beat her to it.

"You want to go, don't you?"

"Yeah-," Katie shrugged, there was no point arguing it. "-but I won't if you don't want me to."

"Nah, it's okay. I'll suffer through and tell you all about their loss when we go to the Holland's tonight."

Katie felt her throat clench at the mention of their dinner. She and Nancy shared a long silence as they thought of their lost friend and Katie knew it was going to be a tough one. It was almost the year anniversary after all and she found the closer they got to the year mark the worse her nightmares got. She would wake screaming, sweating and disoriented in the middle of the night. Her dad never woke up for it, thank god, but Katie's episodes had been growing more sever as the dates passed by. She had a feeling Nancy's were too but her stubborn friend would never admit it.

"Do you want me to pick you up? Or meet you there?" Nancy asked quietly, the mood still solemn with the thought of Barbara.

"Just meet me there. Thanks Nance." She gave her friend a small smile and flipped her hair over her shoulder, tossing her bag onto her side. She clutched her History book close to her chest and gave Nancy one last look before heading down the bleacher stairs.

"Where you are going, Fitz?" Harrington's voice rang over the court and Katie winced, knowing Steve would probably take it personally that she was leaving.

"Home, I have to get ready for tonight." She said, and he gave her a suspicious look. She gave him an innocent one as she could before taking another step towards that exit of the gym. Steve looked to Nancy for assistance, clearing telling her to keep her there for his support. Nancy shrugged. Steve looked deeply offended.

"What's tonight?"

Katie paused at the new voice and looked over at Billy, who was

looking at Katie with intrigue and she couldn't help but admire his toned body while he stood there, glistening with sweat, eyeing her like his next meal. Although if he was going to continue to look at her like she was a piece of meat she was going to have words with him. She sure wasn't going to be like the girls that had already been trying to throw themselves at him.

"None of your business, Hargrove." Steve shot him an annoyed look and gave Katie and Nancy behind her an apologetic one. Billy said nothing as he backed away, hands in the air as if in surrender and quickly went back to the game. But not before sending Katie another wink. She stared, unphased before turning back to Steve.

"I'll see you guys tonight, yeah?"

"Yeah, see you." Steve muttered looking defeated as he went back to the game as well. Katie rushed out as soon as she could without hurting Steve's feelings any more than she already was.

"I can't believe it's been a year."

Katie sighed, letting her erratic breathing even out as she sat across from Nancy in the bathroom of what was once Barb's house. Her memories of all three of them being here, playing dress up, talking about boys, reading magazines, doing each other's makeup, everything came rushing back every time she was here. They all grew up here. They liked to switch houses now and then, but she knew they all had fond memories at each of their homes. The pain brought on by those memories overwhelmed her. Nancy's house was filled with laughter and light and noise and her own house wasn't anything special but at least they'd gotten to have fun and be themselves there. And now Barb's house was filled with guilt and pain and loss. Katie was so overwhelmed she felt her chest might explode. Nancy and Katie sat together, surrounded by pictures of Barbara smiling through the ages and the images had brought Nancy to tears after Barb's parents had told the three of them that they were selling their house to hire an investigator to help them find Barb.

Little did they know that their little girl was dead. Lost to some other dark world that neither of them could even talk about. And Katie and

Nancy were responsible. How could they have let this happen?

"It's our fault." Katie whispered, her voice meek and barely audible. She looked at Nancy as a fresh set of tears threatened to pour out. "We let it happen."

"And no one knows-," Nancy sobbed, her emotions getting the best of her. She put her head in her hands as she spoke. "-her parents are going to spend the *rest* of their lives looking for her. And we can't *tell* them? How *cruel* is that. They'll never know, and for *what*-?"

"A *stupid* lab that covers up their tracks all too well. What the *hell* are they even investigating now? What are they even experimenting on?" Katie felt her sorrow turn to anger as it usually did when she thought of *those* people. The ones with judging eyes and know it all attitudes that had not only gotten Barb killed but also framed poor Eleven for all the events that had occurred last year. Katie felt her hatred boiling, hatred for the Hawkins Lab, the *real* reason their friend was killed. The *real* reason Eleven wasn't with them anymore and the *real* reason Will Byer's had gone missing. The guilt that Katie felt was real, she knew she shouldn't have let Barb go alone, she knew Nancy was going to be preoccupied and she had had an awful feeling about it in the first place. She should have followed her gut and told them both to just stay at her house. She should've come to pick them up. She should've been there.

But she hadn't been. And now Barb was dead.

But she knew who was to blame for the whole catastrophe to begin with and she wanted to make them pay.

"I don't know what they're doing. But we should find out. And we should-,"

Before Nancy could finish her sentence, to which Katie was almost regretful, there was a knock on the bathroom door. Katie cleared her throat and stood up, looking at herself in the mirror. Her eyes were red rimmed, and her nose was rubbed raw; there would be no mistaking what had taken place in the bathroom. Clearly the girls had been crying.

But she was sure the Holland's would understand.

"Nance? Fitz? You guys okay?" Steve's voice rang on the other side of the door and both girls gave out a simultaneous sigh of relief. At least they wouldn't have to explain why they'd been crying to Barb's parents quite yet. Afterall no one wanted emotional teenage girls in their bathroom for too long.

"Come in, Steve." Nancy crossed her arms and Katie noticed her tone of voice had change. Nancy almost seemed annoyed now. It couldn't have anything to do with Steve, could it? Katie gave Nancy a questioning look, but Nancy just shook her head quickly as the door opened.

"Everything alright? It's getting a little awkward out there-," Steve paused in mid chuckle as he entered the bathroom and looked at the grief-stricken girls. Both red eyed and looking at the floor. Steve's heart ached for both. Unbeknownst to them, he too felt the guilt of Barb's death.

"You need a second?" He asked, eyes looking knowingly at them. Katie nodded, and Nancy turned back around to grab another tissue. Steve nodded and backed out of the bathroom without another word.

And without missing a beat Nancy turned to Katie with a broken, dead look in her eye.

"We need to do something about this." She whispered. Katie's chest ached, and her mind was screaming at her to go against what her friend was saying. It was too risky, too dangerous, it would put them both in jeopardy. They could get killed themselves along with their families, both whom were innocent. But she nodded anyway.

"Yeah-," She said. "-we do."

Katie's mind raced over what Nancy had said as she drove home. She knew what Nancy was going through, she really did, and she wanted her to understand that she wasn't alone in it, but she knew what she wanted to attempt was risky. She wanted to expose those people, the government supposedly, and tell everyone the truth about Barbara

and the Upside Down. Katie had to admit she had similar feelings, but she was also scared to death of what could happen to them as a result. Nancy seemed determined though, and she wasn't going to abandon her friend a second time.

"Holy shit!"

Katie stomped on the breaks of her car with little time to think. Her head nearly bobbed off of the steering wheel while she heard the loud screeching of tires on pavement as someone whipped out of their driveway entirely too fast, presumably without looking. Katie's heart dropped as her car stopped mere inches from getting bumped by an all too familiar blue Camaro. She growled under her breath as she parked her car and wrenched the door open.

"Hey!" The word ripped through the night air just as Billy's door opened and he stepped out, cigarette hanging from his mouth, clad in jeans and leather jacket. He smiled at her as she walked over, not feeling the sour mood she'd been put in.

"What the hell, Billy? You almost hit me!" Katie seethed, stomping over to the boy while he smirked and leaned against his idling car. She swore she could smell his cologne from where she stood, and it made her dizzy. But she shook her head, she didn't have time to be distracted right now.

"Sorry Katherine didn't mean to scare ya." He chuckled, and she gave him a look that said she was anything but amused. She scoffed as she looked at him. He looked like he had anticipated her driving down this road and it annoyed her further. How could he even have known that?

"You're not really stalking me, are you?" She asked, eyes wide.

He shook his head and pointed to the house which they stood in front of. It was a small house and they were on one side that had the garage on it. On the other side of the main road Katie could see a front porch light and screen doors protecting the patio. He watched her looking at the house and nodded.

"This is the shitty neighborhood the folks picked out. I live here."

Didn't see you coming." He explained, taking a drag of his cigarette and looking at her levelly. His gaze was piercing, as it had been the three other times she'd been around him. Katie rolled her eyes.

"Well here's a tip- maybe look behind you when you're pulling out?" She suggested, sarcasm heavy in her tone as she pulled her sweater closer to her body. The air was bitter cold, and she could see her breath as she berated him. He said nothing for a moment just swayed from side to side as he gazed at her. And then Billy laughed again.

"Now tell me sweet Katherine...*why* would I want to look behind me when I pull out? It's so much better to look at them face first. Ya know it really gives you a great angle as their about to-,"

"Okay!" Katie cut him off, hands up in defense eyed wide. She tried to hide the red tint that was making itself known on her cheeks. It wasn't working as he continued to smirk. "Poor choice of words on my part. How about you don't be such a raging asshole while you drive, yeah?" She growled at him, annoyed that he was like this and that he got her to react so easily. He'd only been here two damn days and she was going crazy. Usually she was evenly tempered but with the dinner she had just had and with him standing there just *smirking* at her she was well on her way over the edge.

"Oh? A raging asshole? I thought you liked me, Katherine, what happened?" He asked, his voice implying he was playing a game. Too bad she wasn't in the playing mood.

"I thought I did too but clearly you're not the same kid I knew, so do me a favor and leave me alone, okay?" She reached her car after promptly turning away from him and didn't give him time to answer as she stepped on the gas, zooming by his face which still held an amused smirk. She tried her hardest not to look in the rear view mirror but she failed miserably. He was stood there the entire time, watching her drive away.

Oh that boy is infuriating!

*Hope you enjoyed the chapter! Next one will have Uncle Jim in it yay!
And we will also be attending the Halloween party oooh, what do you*

guys think Katie is going to dress up as? Let me know! See you next time!

-Alyssa

5. Chapter four

Hey guys! Here's another one. I know I said last chapter that this would have the Halloween party in it but it didn't feel right to add it in to a regular chapter, I feel like it needs it's own chapter ya know? Also I apologize for any and all typos and spelling errors, I try my best but sometimes the words ust blur together...So...here ya go! Enjoy!

CHAPTER FOUR: Elm Street

The wind was brutal that morning. Katie could hear it whipping violently against her house. Some of the branches outside her window repeatedly slammed into the glass and it was making it nearly impossible to go back to sleep. Glancing at her alarm clock she saw it was 5:00 AM. She still had an hour to sleep and yet the frigid October wind was making it impossible.

Of course, she would've slept through it fine had it not been for her nightmare waking her up. Again.

It was the same one; always the same one with some variances here and there but the overall picture was the same. She shuttered, the essence of it fresh on her mind and she pulled her comforter a little closer to her as if she could shield the images from her being; like a little kid hiding from what was in the closet. She listened to the wind continue to wail and whine outside her window and decided that maybe she should wake up early since she clearly wasn't going back to bed any time soon. With a low moan and a crack of her back Katie got up from her bed and turned her light on. It was still dark outside much to her dismay and she looked at her bed longingly one last time before traipsing into the kitchen to make a pot of coffee for her father and herself. She peaked into her dad's room and saw that his bed was made, and the room was quiet. Out in the living room she heard the TV going with the news.

Katie scrunched her face up in confusion and wondered how he was able to get up before her every day and make his bed and not have making coffee be the first thing he did. She walked into the living

room and saw her dad, a book in hand, reading glasses on the verge of falling off his nose.

"Hey Dad."

"Morning Pumpkin. Why are you up so early?" His kind, quiet voice made her heart ache a little.

It was a rare thing when she got to see him sober and fully aware and the mornings were usually the perfect time. However, Katie rarely got to see him due to her need for sleep and the ungodly hour he had to get up for work.

"The wind is too loud. You getting ready for work?" She leaned against the frame of the kitchen and watched him as he nodded, smiling gently at her.

"Do you want me to make us some coffee before you go?" She asked.

"Sure, Honey, thank you." He nodded again, and she smiled slightly at him.

She wandered into their small kitchen and got started on the coffee. She noticed his boots and bag by the door, ready to leave. She wondered briefly, as she always did, how he was so organized and well-spoken in the mornings and by dinner time he could barely remember his name. It broke her heart seeing him change so quickly but she knew it was just to keep his nightmares away too. He had things he couldn't run from, just like she did. She didn't blame him for it, but she did wonder.

She put his coffee in a travel mug and brought it to him in the living room. He had just turned the TV off and was standing up, putting his US Postal Service hat on his head and his blue sweater over his collared shirt.

"Thanks, Pumpkin. You're sweet. You uh-," He cleared his throat, and she wanted to chuckle. They didn't really have conversations other than how their days were. "-you need anything from me before school?"

"No, Dad, thank you though. Work needs you though, so you should

hurry. Drive safe." She kissed his stubbled and aged cheek and he looked at her kindly, with dark eyes to match her own.

"Love you. See you for supper."

And with that he gathered his things, quickly slipped on his boots and headed for his car parked next to hers. She watched him from her front door and shivered from the wind. Some of the autumn leaves were swept into her house as the wind bit at her nose. She watched him drive all the way down their street until his headlights disappeared.

"Love you too." She muttered and shut the door, turning to get ready for school.

She got dressed fast, her usual jeans and a flannel working fine while she threw her hair up in a ponytail. She threw her sneakers on and made herself one more cup of coffee before checking her backpack for all the things she needed. Once she was satisfied she had everything she ran to her car, getting hit with not only cold wind but rain as well. She turned her key over in her car and huffed in aggravation when the engine wouldn't turn over. She tried again, and it sputtered again. She tried one more time and it barely made a sound.

"Shit!" She slammed her fist into the steering wheel and groaned.

Maybe she should've had her dad check her car before leaving. And then as if things couldn't get any worse she saw the signature blue lights of a police car behind her. She heard the short chirp from the vehicle and groaned once again.

"Now what?!" She opened her door and stood up, about to tell the police officer in front of her that nothing was going on and she had no idea what they wanted when she heard a familiar voice ring over the intercom.

"Need a ride?"

Instantly Katie's face lit up and she nodded, grabbing her bag from her car and locking it before running over to the police truck.

"Uncle Jim!" She exclaimed and threw her arms around her jovial uncle while he laughed and returned the gesture.

"Hey, kiddo, how the hell are ya?" He asked and ruffled her hair, messing her ponytail up and making her roll her eyes. He was always treating her like she was still ten years old.

"I'm good, how did you know I needed a ride though?"

"Honestly I was just driving by and saw you there. Car not workin?" He asked, adjusting his hat and turning the heat on in the car, noticing his niece shivering.

"Engine wouldn't turn over. Might be the battery, thing is old as shit anyway." She shrugged and he chuckled.

"I'll get you a new one, no worries. How's the old man doing?" Jim asked, as he usually did, always wanting to keep tabs on his little brother.

"He's..." Katie paused, trying to find the right words. Her uncle knew her dad struggled with alcohol but did he knew just how bad it was? She didn't want to start trouble. "He's fine." She finished and he gave her a skeptical look.

"Mhm, okay. Sure." He nodded, but let it go.

He made a mental note to stop in on Jack soon and ask how he was doing himself.

"Thanks for the ride. And thank you for offering to buy me a new car battery. You're the best uncle a girl could ask for." She beamed at him and he nodded, a light blush lingering on his round cheeks.

It was no secret he loved his niece with all his heart but it was also no secret that he hated being doted on and Katie loved to take advantage of that fact.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Put your seatbelt on, will ya?"

She chuckled and obliged to his request. The trip to school was short and Katie noticed lots of people staring as she got out of the police

truck. Most likely there'd be a rumor about her arrest by second period but she didn't care. She almost liked to see how far the rumor mill could go.

"Hey, be good. *Learn* something. *Don't* do anything I did in Highschool." Jim laughed as he rolled up his window while Katie rolled her eyes and bid him a goodbye.

He blared the siren as his goodbye in return. Katie ran into the school, dreading first period, but happy that she had seen her uncle.

"You're going to this!" Nancy tugged on Jonathan's arm as she shoved a bright orange party poster into his hands. He looked to Katie for help and she laughed.

"She's right. I'll force you if necessary."

"Oh *c'mon*, you're going to this too?"

"Um, free booze, weed, *and* you get to dress up as whatever you want? Who *wouldn't* want to go?"

Jonathan looked at Katie like the answer was obvious and Nancy groaned.

"C'mon we all know you're just going to sit around reading a book doing nothing..." Nancy sounded on the verge of begging Jonathan to come and Katie raised her eyebrow in question.

Nancy ignored her and Katie chuckled.

Oh boy...

As much as Nancy liked to think of herself as mysterious, Katie could read her like a book. She wanted Jonathan there for a reason and Katie had an inkling she knew what that reason was. She only hoped Nancy wouldn't do something stupid while still spoken for by Steve.

"Actually, I have plans. I'm going trick-or-treating with Will."

"Perfect, so we'll pick you up at 9:00 PM? Trick-or-treating doesn't go

on longer than that does it?" Katie asked and she saw her friend roll his eyes, clearly having got caught in their trap.

"No, no...-", He stuttered trying to backtrack. Katie wasn't having it.

"Will you get me one of those big candy bars while you're out? I'm sure by the time you get to the party I'm gonna have the munchies or something."

Katie smiled as she knew she was on the verge of making Jonathan agree. She could tell because he was smiling, his cheeks were red, and he kept glancing at Nancy as if she had all the answers. Nancy was using her doe eyes on him.

"So is that a yes?" Nancy asked, her voice sweet and inviting.

"Uh..." Jonathan stuttered again while Nancy took a step closer to him. "M-Maybe. Uh Maybe, sure." He shrugged and took a step back, overwhelmed by Katie's beautiful and alluring best friend.

"Yay!" Katie cheered in delight and Jonathan took a deep breath. He had just been tag teamed and he was out of breath because of it. He wondered how anyone said no to these two.

"See you there." Nancy winked at him and he blushed a beat red from ears all the way to his neck. Katie chuckled to herself and watched her friend walk away toward her fifth period, a certain sway in her step that told her she knew she was being watched as she walked away.

Oh that sly girl...

She prayed Nancy was smart and that poor Harrington wouldn't be blindsided.

"What was that?" Jonathan asked Katie and Katie shrugged.

"I think she was flirting with you."

Katie was well aware of Jonathan's crush on Nancy and for a while Nancy had had short lived feelings for the quiet boy with the camera but nothing had come of it and she had chosen Steve. However,

Jonathan's feelings hadn't dispersed and right now Nancy's signals were confusing him.

As they should be considering she was still with Harrington.

"Don't read too much into that quite yet."

"I won't." He said and Katie patted him on the back.

"So..." He looked over at her as they walked to their next class, eyebrow raised. "What are you gonna wear for a costume? Want to match me?"

All Jonathan did was shake his head while he chuckled quietly.

Katie hadn't thought this out. She should've been smart enough to know that when she had accepted a ride from her uncle Jim this morning that she wouldn't have a ride home later on in the day. She didn't know where Jonathan was, and his car wasn't in the parking lot. Steve and Nancy were long gone. And she sure as hell wasn't going to take the bus.

"Well shit." She cursed quietly and bit the bottom of her lip. Thankfully the rain had stopped but the wind was still bitter cold and whipping her hair every which way. She knew the walk to her house would take her about twenty to twenty-five minutes. She would be freezing, but at least she'd be home.

"Where's your car?"

Katie tensed at the new voice and turned to see Billy coming up behind her, cigarette hanging from his lips and denim jacket wrapped tightly around him with a dark flannel underneath.

"I thought I told you to leave me alone?"

She hadn't talked to or seen Billy for a couple days and she was glad. He hadn't been a distraction and that meant she had been able to think clearly. Hopefully that streak would continue even now as he stood in front of her with a smug look on his face.

"Do you need a ride, Katherine?" He asked, and for once Katie didn't hear a teasing, or arrogant tone in his voice.

Is he really asking if I need a ride home? Or is this a trick?

"Depends." She shrugged, hugging her flannel closer to her as a gust of wind nearly swept her off of her feet.

"On what?" He tilted his head to the side, taking a drag. The smell was making Katie want a hit. She could use some nicotine. Especially if Billy was around.

"On if you're still gonna be a raging asshole."

He laughed, throwing his head back and grabbing at his torso. The laugh seemed genuine enough and it made Katie chuckle.

"I won't be an asshole. I promise."

"A *raging* asshole?"

"Ah yes, sorry, I promise I won't be a *raging* asshole to you Katherine." He smirked at her and his blue eyes were blazing. She thought for a moment and shrugged.

"And let me hit your cigarette." She reached for it and he chuckled.

"Are you negotiating with me?" He handed it to her anyway and she chuckled before taking a drag.

"I guess I kind of am. Sorry." She felt her body tingle as the nicotine rushed through, working into every crevice. She loved it.

"Oh an apology? How sweet of you." He started to walk over to his car and Katie followed, almost regretting accepting his offer.

"Yes. It is sweet of me." She glared at him and he nodded, taking his cigarette back. He smiled at her and went over to the passenger side, opening the door for her.

"You can sit in the front, Max isn't here today. Doctor's appointment." He said and she nodded, sliding into the passenger side, marveling at

how low the car was to the ground. She felt like she was way too low for comfort. He quickly got into the driver's side and started the car, the engine roaring to life unlike hers this morning. He pulled out of the parking lot and started toward her house after some direction from herself.

"So, where is your car?" He asked, pushing his cassette into the player, the low sound of Def Leppard playing in the background.

"Battery shit the bed this morning." She explained and she saw him glance over to her.

"You need a replacement. I might have an extra one in my garage if you need one."

"Wow, Billy how *sweet* of you." She mocked and he grinned at her. "But no thank you, my Uncle is going to take care of it for me. Very nice of you to offer though." She pointed out and he shrugged.

"I'm a generous guy, what can I say?" He winked at her and she rolled her eyes, trying to hide her smile.

"So can I ask you something?" She asked, preparing for him to say no. Instead he smiled.

"You just did." He said with another wink. She wondered if all that winking would give him a twitch eventually.

"I thought you said you *weren't* gonna be an asshole?" She rolled her eyes at his antics and he shrugged.

"I said raging asshole but either way. Ask."

"Who is Max?"

Slightly, not too obviously, but slightly Katie felt the mood shift. Billy's hand gripped the steering wheel a little tighter and his jaw was a little more taut. She must have struck a nerve and she felt bad, not wanting to make him feel uncomfortable.

"She's my step sister." He said simply and Katie could tell that was all she was going to get out of him on the subject.

Step sister? Does that mean his parents got divorced?

She pondered this as he continued to drive. She heard him breathe slowly through his nose before asking her a question.

"Let me ask you something now." He said, clearly wanting a change of subject. She nodded, ready to change it as well.

"Why did you hold on to that?" He asked, gesturing toward her bracelet with the piece of sea glass in it.

The very same one he had given to her all those years ago. Her heart pumped loudly in her ears as she thought of a reason. She couldn't exactly tell him it was because she always thought they'd maybe end up together one day and that she had obsessed over him for so long. She didn't want to tell him she had no reason to hold onto it either. So she told the truth, but not the whole truth.

"It was pretty and it was a reminder of how much I love the ocean." She said simply.

He looked over at her for a moment, analyzing her features and she swore he was reading her every thought. She hoped she didn't give too much away. Nancy always said her face was an open book. He smiled slightly and looked back at the road.

"I'm glad you did."

His voice was quiet as he spoke but she had heard what he said and it made her throat clench with emotion. It made her have hope of Billy being the same kid she knew. Maybe he was in there after all and all she had to do was get to know him better. Maybe he was hiding under this male bravado, testosterone filled teen.

"Me too." She responded and he glanced at her with a smirk.

"Of course it had *nothing* to do with it reminding you of *me*, right? Cause that's just crazy." He had a teasing tone again and she almost wanted to smack him.

"No-," She said. "-it didn't."

He laughed and nodded, clearly not believing her but not bothering to push her on it further.

"Elm Street right?"

Katie paused and looked over at him with a raised brow as he turned onto her street. Elm Street was correct but she didn't recall telling him that.

"Um Billy? Are you sure you're not stalking me?" She asked again for what seemed to be the third time. He laughed.

"Jesus Christ, Katherine, we're practically neighbors. I'm not stalking you. You're the only person I know in this town really and I know what your car looks like and I saw it parked like six houses down." He explained as he reached her house which had her beat up car parked right outside where it had been for the last twenty-four hours.

"Oh yeah, Cherry Lane right?"

"Mhm." He nodded and put the car in park.

"Well...that's good." She said, not knowing what else to say.

"Good that I'm not stalking you? Yeah I'd say so too." He chuckled and nodded at her. He couldn't tell if he liked her being at a loss for words or not but she sure was funny.

"Well, thanks for the ride-,"

"Oh any time sweetheart, I really mean that. *Any* time you want-,"

"Thanks for the ride *home*, Billy." She said sternly, ignoring the burning on her cheeks as he grinned at her. It seemed he liked teasing her too much to not entirely be an asshole the whole time they were in the car together. She gathered her things and noticed the orange party poster hanging out from her Bio book. She grabbed it and looked at Billy.

"You going to this?" She asked.

It hadn't gone unnoticed that he had said she was the only person he

knew in this town and Katie's sense of loyalty made her feel obligated to invite him.

"What is it?" He snatched the poster from her and read it quickly.
"Yeah, I'll go. You going?" He asked.

"Duh, it's Halloween!" She exclaimed, as if that was the only answer necessary.

"Okay, see you there?" He asked.

"You better come dressed as something other than yourself." She instructed as she got out of the Camaro. He shook his head.

"No way."

"There's no point if you just go as yourself." She sighed in annoyance. What was it with boys and Halloween? Were they really too cool to dress up?

"Yeah there is, booze and chicks."

She laughed, throwing her head back and he watched her as she smiled genuinely. He smiled at her and she shook her head.

"I'll see you there, Billy. And thank you again."

"Goodnight, Katherine."

Billy drove off after Katie was safely in her house.

Halloween party next chapter! Things are going to get fun! Hope you enjoyed this chapter! We got to see Katie's dad a little more and Uncle Jim! Anyways, until next time!

-Alyssa

6. Chapter Five

Hello everyone! I'm sorry this took a while, I was planning on having it up on actual Halloween night but I got busy with work and parties and ya know, life in general, but here is the Halloween chapter as promised! And thank you to those of you who have reviewed, they were very sweet! And don't worry, I am not going to abandon this story, I don't have a set updating schedule so it's just going to come as it comes.

Also fair warning: this chapter has underage drinking and use of marijuana

Anyways, enjoy!

CHAPTER FIVE: Halloween

Katie could not believe what she was hearing. She knew without a doubt that the deep, aggravating pit of fury in her stomach had everything to do with what Steve Harrington was saying, but still she couldn't believe it.

"You are not seriously going as Joel and Lana."

She couldn't even bring herself to make it a question. The disappointment she felt with her friends was beyond comparison.

"Yeah, why not? It's the perfect couple costume!" Harrington beamed at Katie as she looked at him with a deadpanned expression, hopefully conveying just how saddened she was to hear that. She sighed and looked down at her lunch, shaking her head as she sat across from Steve and Nancy in the cafeteria. Noise was bustling all around them but all Katie could focus on was the fact that her friends were lame.

"More like the *laziest* couple costume!" She exclaimed, exasperated yet again by Harrington's ability to simplify things even on a holiday that was meant to be drastic and extra. Their peers around them were starting to give them looks as they argued back and forth. But

thankfully the school cafeteria was just loud enough that no one cared that they were yelling.

"What! No way Fitz, you're just jealous because you don't have anyone to be a couple costume with you and you gotta go it alone." Steve rationalized taking a bite out of his sandwich, giving her a look that said she couldn't argue with him on his point. She laughed, throwing her head back and let what Steve just said roll right off of her.

"Harrington it's *Halloween*! You can literally pick anything to dress up as tonight and you are consciously choosing to dress up as a guy that had RayBan sunglasses and a blazer. Talk about boring! And what's worse!-," She threw her hands up for emphasis. "-You're making my poor Nancy dress up as the prostitute!"

Steve paused and thought for a moment while Katie continued to vehemently seethe at the lovable doofus that sat before her.

"Well...she's not really gonna be a prostitute. She's gonna be Lana, yeah, but that doesn't mean she has to be exactly like her ya know?" He once again tried to rationalize his silly idea and Katie mentally asked herself why she even bothered arguing with Steve. He would always have something to say in return whether it be a valid remark or pure nonsense and like Uncle Jim used to tell her when she was younger, you can't argue with stupid people.

"Nance-," Katie looked over at her friend who had been watching this bickering match for about ten minutes, covering her mouth with her hand to keep from laughing at the two of them. "-you can't seriously want to dress up as Lana, do you?"

Nancy shrugged, indifferent about the decision made on Steve's behalf. Katie had a feeling Nancy was just trying to appease Steve because she'd been having outbursts with him lately and it had been putting him in a down mood. She loved her friend for always thinking of others but Katie also knew that Nancy loved Halloween and loved to dress up and be as fun and creative as she could be. Dressing up as Lana from *Risky Business* was certainly not going to live up to those standards.

"I don't mind. It's an easy costume to put together anyway." Nancy said, sipping her water as if to not have to speak up on the subject any more than she had to and Katie groaned.

"I don't know what I'm gonna do with either of you. Hopeless. Truly hopeless. How are we supposed to get super drunk and run around with our costumes and make a scene if you two look like normal people?" Katie asked, raising her eyebrow and Nancy laughed.

"I don't plan on getting that drunk, Katie." Nancy smiled softly and Katie rolled her eyes, clearly defeated.

It seemed she would be attending a Halloween party with Joel and Lana.

"What are you going as, Fitzs?" Steve asked, throwing an arm around Nancy and giving Katie a grin that clearly said he won this battle and was rubbing it in her face.

"It's a surprise." She winked at Nancy, who actually already knew what she was going as, and Steve pouted that she wasn't sharing what she was going to be.

"Can I guess?" He asked.

"Guess all you want, I'm not going to tell you." She laughed and he thought a bit.

"Oh! I know! You're gonna go as Marilyn Monroe." He said confidently.

Katie rolled her eyes.

"No, too obvious. Plus there's no way a blonde wig would look good on me."

He pointed to her and nodded.

"That's a good point, you don't have the bone structure to be a blonde."

Nancy and Katie paused at his statement and briefly looked at one

another. It sounded like another one of his nonsense facts that he tended to pull out of his ass sometimes and the two girls giggled.

He really was a doofus.

"Oh!" He shouted suddenly, ignoring the fact that Nancy and Katie were laughing at his ridiculous claims. "A mermaid!"

The girls laughed some more.

Katie looked at herself in the mirror and sighed. It was hopeless, there was no way she would pull off being one of the most iconic characters known to man. But she sure as hell would try.

She applied just a little more black eyeshadow and smudged it upwards trying, and failing, at making it have a flawless finish like it was blended into her eyes and was just a part of her. She'd never been really good at makeup and Nancy barely wore any but she knew her friend could've helped her out a little bit. Instead, she was sitting on her bed, flipping through the latest Cosmo, and raising her eyebrow every once and a while at what Katie was sure she was thinking was a scandalous statement.

"You know-," Katie began, "-you could help a girl out."

Nancy peered up at her and shook her head.

"You're doing just fine. Looks just like her, honestly. I can't wait to see the dress on you."

Katie smirked and looked over at her closet where her long black costume hung, just waiting for her to transform into an icon.

"Are you going to wear the lipstick?" Nancy asked.

"Duh, it's the best part of the look!" She grabbed her ruby red lipstick, courtesy of the local Hawkins drug store and applied it liberally. She coated her lips until she felt them heavy and sticky. The only part of the costume that she would dislike was that she'd have to keep applying the lipstick all night if she planned on drinking. Which she did.

"When is Steve gonna be here?"

"In like thirty minutes, can you be ready by then?" Nancy asked, eyebrow raised. Katie snorted.

"I'm ready now."

"Wow." That's all Nancy said as Katie turned to her and showed her makeup.

She laughed and darted over to the closet, eager to get the costume on for the full look. When she finally managed to slip it on without ruining her face or hair, which Nancy had flat ironed, she looked at herself in the mirror again and gasped.

"Holy shit!" She laughed excitedly and Nancy was still gaping at how her friend looked. "I'm Morticia Addams!"

Seeing Steve react to Katie's costume was better than what she had anticipated. As she recalled in the cafeteria he had been spouting out a bunch of your typical girly girl costumes. Princess, mermaid, Dorothy from The Wizard of Oz etc. and when she had opened her door to let him in his mouth had dropped.

"You're scary!" He had said and she laughed, reveling in his horror.

"Thank you, Harrington that's so sweet of you to say." She had beamed and rolled her eyes. Once they were all in his car and the sun had officially set Katie showed them what she had been stashing for the party.

"Nips?" Steve asked, intrigued and also grabbing for one out of her hand.

"Duh, gotta pregame."

"Right, gonna be stupid teenagers, right?" Nancy spoke up and also grabbed one from Katie which she was surprised at. She had thought Nancy wasn't going to drink that much but she wasn't going to stop her. If she wanted to let loose who was Katie to prevent her from doing so? Also, Katie was hoping this night would help both her and

Nancy feel numb for Barb. She didn't want to feel guilt tonight. She didn't want to let her pain in tonight. She also didn't want to remember any of the horrible things that had happened last year. She wanted to have fun and drink and forget and enjoy herself like any regular teenage girl. And even that thought alone had led guilt to creep into her head.

She took a couple more shots to try and chase the feeling away.

Once they got to Tina's house Katie was excited, her nerves buzzing with the now four shots she had taken, and she wanted to get inside and see what was going on.

"Ready?" Steve asked.

"Ready!" Both girls ran out of the car and headed for the door.

Inside was every Halloween fanatics dream. There were decorations, fog, alcohol almost everywhere, and purple and orange lights and music was blaring and Katie had a feeling she'd see some weed sometime tonight too. And there were people *everywhere*.

"Let's get drunk!"

"Hi Nancy, Katie! You made it!" Tina's high pitched but friendly voice called over the loud music and Katie smiled at her. She looked great, dressed up as an M&M.

"You guys look *awesome*, Katie oh my god, that *makeup* though! Oh, hi Steve!" By the blushed look on her face Katie could tell she was drunk already and she didn't want to be far behind.

"Thanks Tina, where can a girl get some booze around here?" She asked.

"Everywhere!" She giggled and hiccupped in the process, the four of them all laughed.

"Just pick up a cup and start pouring!" She said.

And Katie did just that. She wasn't sure what she started with, but she knew it was hard liquor. It was brown and it tasted like

cinnamon and fire going down her throat all at the same time. It burned going all the way to her stomach and she felt her body grow hot. She also didn't know when Steve and Nancy had wandered off but she didn't mind, enjoying herself while she drank cup after cup, talking to her peers and dancing around the living room. The loud music was blaring in her ears and she was moving her body to every song, nonstop. She was a machine, drinking and dancing, drinking and dancing some more. Nancy had joined for a bit but she had ran off with Steve again. Katie kept taking shots, and kept filling her cup. She even shot gunned a few beers to show off her drinking skills. Tommy was quite impressed with it but even in Katie's drunken state she knew she didn't care what he thought. He was a douche, and always would be. It wasn't until she was fully slurring, her body steaming, and her mind happy and foggy that she knew Billy was there. She heard a bunch of people shouting his name outside and she moved toward the commotion, happy and drunk as she stumbled through the people. Outside was a sight to see. Billy was doing a keg stand. Katie laughed and tried to picture herself doing a keg stand but even the thought made her dizzy. So dizzy that she stumbled backwards, landing on her butt with a thump as she landed on one of Tina's plants and laughed loudly as she sat on the ground.

"You okay Katie?!" Tina yelled while laughing, trying and failing to help Katie up while she herself was also stumbling over.

"Fit as a fiddle!" Katie beamed and Tina cackled in response.

"*That's* how you do it Hawkins! *That's* how you do it!"

Katie was still laughing when she heard Billy shouting in victory, the two loud girls had caught his attention and Katie saw his eyes light up. Beautiful and blue as they were.

"Well, well, what do we have here? A drunk Morticia Addams and a boozy M&M?" His voice sounded like velvet to Katie and she didn't know why she thought that but she was sure it's what it sounded like.

"Hi Billy!" She smiled and he smiled back, offering her his hand to help her up as she was still on the soggy ground. Her behind was starting to get cold but she wasn't sure if she could feel it or not. She took his hand though, gloved although fingerless, and she looked at

him and tried her best to focus on what his costume was.

"Hi Katherine-," He winked at her and pulled her closer to her him. He smelled like cigarettes and that delicious cologne he wore. Plus beer, lots and lots of beer. She could feel her heart pounding in her chest from the smell. "-you look ravishing." He muttered in her ear so only she could hear his voice and she smiled, leaning in to him.

"I like you when you're nice." She stated, and he laughed, pulling back to search her face.

"Oh yeah? You think I should be nice?" He sounded like he was in on some joke she wasn't and she pouted but shrugged, moving on.

"Yeah, can I get you a drink?"

"I'd love that." His arm was around her waist as he followed her through the house to the booze and she could feel his heat through her costume. It was making her shiver in delight and she loved the feeling. She wanted more of it.

"Do you like..." She paused and looked down at their options. There were a lot. Too many for her to name in her current state. "Alcohol?" She finished, and he laughed again, nodding.

"I do, but here, why don't I make us some drinks and you wait right here." He offered and she nodded. He slid his arm away from her and started to mix some drinks while she waited patiently. She loved the blaring music and started to dance again, winking at Billy while he watched, amused. She didn't know if he was drunk like her but she suspected he was a little drunk because his cheeks were rosy and they were making his eyes glow a brighter blue than she'd ever seen them. It was beautiful.

"Here you are, *Mrs. Addams*." Billy extended his hand to her and Katie took the red cup and sipped from it. It was fruity with a hint of bitterness to it. She didn't care though.

"Honestly I don't think Morticia would *ever* dare to get this drunk!" She laughed over the music, still dancing and spilling some but she was in a carefree, happy mood and honestly she didn't think Tina

would mind if she accidentally spilled some of her drink. At least it was on linoleum and not carpet.

"So-," Katie started looking at Billy as he watched her amusedly, she swore she heard her own voice slur but she couldn't be sure. "-New Keg King, huh?" She smirked at him and he laughed, nodding.

"Guess so. Any Keg Queens around here?" He asked giving her a look of mischief over the rim of his cup while he sipped it. She snorted, shaking her head.

"No, but it's Tina's party so I guess she could be considered the Queen tonight-," She chuckled as she watched Tina dance on her living room coffee table, nearly taking a dive but Tommy helped her stay up. "-are you trying to make her your queen?"

Billy took a look at Tina and shook his head, taking a step closer to Katie. She could smell his cologne again and it made her already dizzy head start spinning again. She felt intoxicated from it.

"Actually I had someone else in mind."

Katie paused and looked at him. His eyes were stunningly blue, crystalline as they looked at her, reading her face and gauging her reactions to him. He was looking at her like he was waiting for something from her. His gaze was suggestive, dangerous even. Katie wanted to drink in his features and she didn't even know why. She had just reconnected with him and as far as she knew he was only teasing her. Hell, he could just be drunk and trying to hook up, as many teenage boys were. But even drunk Katie could tell he had total control over his every movement, his every word. He said things with purpose and intention and she was meant to listen and she could see he anticipated her reaction. He had incredible control. She, however, did not.

Without a second thought her drunk body and mind leaned toward him, her face so close to his that she could feel the heat from it. He was looking at her eyes, and then down at her lips and back again and Katie felt her heart racing in her throat, pounding in her ears and her head was yelling at her to *do it, just kiss him, just once!*

"Fitz!"

Sprung out of her entranced state she turned away from Billy and saw Steve, red faced and looking pissed off. She hesitated in what to do. Did Steve see her try to kiss Billy? Was he mad about it?

"Harrington?" She questioned as he got to them and Katie chanced a glance at Billy who's jaw was hard and who's eyes had turned to hard steel the moment Steve called her name. He said nothing though, which she was grateful for, for the moment.

"I'm headed home now, do you want a ride?"

Katie was surprised at Steve's statement. Nancy was nowhere in sight and as far as Katie knew he hadn't really let her out of it since they'd gotten to the party.

"Uh-," She hesitated, looking back and forth between Billy and Steve, she could feel her head pounding and honestly she didn't want to leave the party but Steve looked pretty upset. "-where's Nancy?" She asked instead. Steve's jaw clenched at the mention of his girlfriend and he ignored her question.

"I'm leaving so if you're coming you should put the drink down so we can get out of here." His tone was unusually flat and Katie raised an eyebrow at him.

"Um...well-,"

"I'll take her home Harrington, if she doesn't want to leave yet."

Both Katie and Steve looked at Billy who was looking smug as ever as he offered her a ride home. His chin was raised in defiance, ready to argue with Harrington if the need called for it. Steve glared at Billy for a moment and then looked back at Katie.

"Make sure Nancy finds a ride."

And before Katie could even ask why she would need a ride in the first place Steve stormed off, shoving whoever was in his way to get to the exit.

"Steve, wait!" She called but he either didn't hear her over the loud music, or he simply chose to ignore her. Either way it left Katie confused and a little upset that he was so willing to abandon them.

"What the hell was that about?" She wondered aloud and she felt her face scrunching up in confusion. She turned back to Billy and sighed. "Thank you for offering to drive me home."

"Any time." He smirked and she chuckled, heat pooling on her cheeks as she remembered what they had been about to do before Steve showed up.

"Sorry about Steve."

"He's a whiny son of a bitch, ain't he?" He asked and Katie scoffed, glaring at him slightly. She didn't begin to understand the rivalry between Billy and Steve but she sure as hell wasn't going to let him bad talk her friend in front of her.

"No, he's not actually. Something must've happened. I have to go find Nancy." She looked at him and sighed, feeling her drunken happiness slowly fading away as she now had to become the responsible best friend that made sure Nancy was alright. It was a total buzz kill but she knew she would regret it if she didn't make sure everything was okay.

"I'm gonna go find her, I'll find you after?" She asked, hoping he was still willing to give her a ride.

"No need, I'll help you look." He said and she looked at him in surprise. For the whole time he'd been at her school he was getting a reputation as someone that only looked out for himself and yet he was willing to help her find her friend. She wondered if he was just trying to be chivalrous or if he had ulterior motives but at the moment she didn't care.

Both of them set off to find Nancy and the first place Katie decided to look was the bathroom. She knew from personal experience that getting too drunk and then getting upset while drunk usually meant the bathroom was the place to let it all out. She'd had many nights where she had gotten way too drunk and decided she would spill all

of her feelings to either Nancy or Barb in one of their bathrooms. Sometimes it would even be a stranger she would spill her guts to but she also knew it was never a good feeling afterwards and she only hoped Nancy wasn't revealing her darkest secrets to one of their classmates. As she pushed the bathroom door open with Billy behind her peering over her shoulder she was not surprised to find Nancy sitting on the edge of the tub. She was surprised to see her white blouse covered in what looked to be punch. And she was certainly surprised to see Jonathan there with her, offering her what looked like a cup of water.

"Jonathan?" Katie asked.

Both of them turned at the sound of her voice and Jonathan looked surprised, Nancy looked relieved.

"Katie-I think-I think I messed up." Nancy hiccuped and she started to get up but Katie was quick to step into the bathroom and sit next to her instead. Billy stood in the threshold of the bathroom, arms crossed, observing the scene before him. He didn't look impressed.

"It's okay-," She said, wrapping her arm around her friend while Nancy laid her head on her shoulder. "-it's okay to mess up sometimes. But Jonathan and I are here to help you." Katie gave a meaningful look to her quiet friend and he nodded.

"Yeah, I'm gonna take you home, okay?" He offered to Nancy, although he sounded like he was proposing the idea to Katie. She nodded once but gave him a stern look. Not that he would do anything but she didn't want her friend to be any more upset than she already was and Katie knew throwing Jonathan into the mix would only stir up emotions she probably didn't want to deal with while intoxicated. Katie knew *she* didn't want to deal with that and she wasn't even a party involved in said triangle. Her head was pounding again and she grabbed Nancy's water, sipping it before putting it to Nancy's lips. She groaned in protest but Katie didn't budge and her friend finally gave in, taking a sip.

"My shirt. It's ruined."

"It is. But it's okay. We can get you a new one. C'mon, it's time to go

home." She stood up with Nancy putting most of her body weight on her and with Katie being also intoxicated they both stumbled. She laughed a bit and Nancy did as well, which was a good sign. Jonathan chuckled and took Nancy from her arms.

"Get her home safe, please." She ordered and gave Nancy a kiss on her cheek, accidentally leaving some red lipstick behind. She hoped she wouldn't care.

"Will do. You need a ride?" Jonathan asked, eyeing Billy who had remained silent through the whole ordeal. When Jonathan looked over at him he clenched his jaw and shook his head.

"No, she doesn't." He said and Jonathan pinched his lips together, giving Katie a nervous look but accepting it as an answer anyway.

"Thanks though." She said. He nodded and escorted Nancy out while she was continuously telling Katie how amazing of a friend she was. Once they were gone she looked to Billy.

"Can we go now? That totally killed my buzz."

He was still leaning against the bathroom door and he chuckled, eyeing her. He looked like a lion ready to pounce.

"I have a better idea actually."

Katie was high. And not just slightly high like *really* high. Her head was fuzzy and her body felt tingly and she felt like everything was moving like a movie. She was focused on her breath in the cold air, watching how it puffed white and billowy and honestly she felt very good. She was relaxed. Her head wasn't pounding anymore and she had a feeling she wouldn't be hungover tomorrow which was a god given gift.

Or rather a gift given to her by Billy.

He had decided to take her on a joy ride to Lover's Lake which was odd to her at first because she didn't plan on being his lover at the lake tonight and she sure as hell wasn't going to hook up with him in his car ever but as soon as he got out a couple of joints she was

excited.

"You're going to share those with me?" She had asked, shocked but excited.

"Duh." He had said and she had giddily laughed while they stepped out of the Camaro, ready to light one. There was no smoking in the car. At least not *this* kind of smoking.

"Some party tonight huh?" He asked after taking a hit and passing it back to her. They were now on their second joint and Katie was loving it. She loved the smell of weed, loved what it made her feel like and she especially loved smoking with other people.

"It was fun until the end..." She shrugged, taking another hit and letting the smoke fill her lungs. "I don't think Nancy and Steve are going to last, to be honest."

She didn't know why she was telling Billy this, of course, but she was high and she just needed to vent a little.

"Oh yeah? Why not?" Billy quirked his head to the side, watching her intensely, as he always did. His body was casting a shadow from the moon light and behind him she could barely see the glow of the moon, hitting his back. She had to admit it was kind of beautiful. Kind of like him. But she wasn't about to admit it to him.

"I'm pretty sure she wants to be with Jonathan. Poor Steve though, he really is a good guy, just a little oblivious sometimes."

"He seems like a dick."

Katie laughed, throwing her head back. She recalled a similar conversation when Billy had first arrived at school only the roles had been reversed.

"What's so funny?" He asked, smirking at her, taking the joint and hitting it. She decided she liked when he smirked at her like he was already in on a secret.

"He said the same thing about you."

His smirk fell and he rolled his eyes while she continued to laugh.

"Well what do you think?" He asked suddenly, and she slowed her laughing, taking a look at him.

He was still a mystery to her, for sure. She had all sorts of conflicted feelings and she wasn't quite sure what to do with them. She knew he was the kid from her memory, deep down, because otherwise why would he be so nice to her and so rude to everyone else? She also knew that he was trying to work his way through all the girls in Hawkins Highschool, which could just mean he was hanging out with her to add her to his growing list. However, she doubted that one considering when she saw him with other girls he never seemed to have any type of conversation with them. Although she might just not be around for that part. And she also knew he was definitely hiding something about himself from everyone. She didn't know what it was but she knew no one walked around like they were a god and actually had a perfectly content life. She could see it in his expressions sometimes. She knew that when he thought she wasn't looking he had a troubled expression on his features like he was deep in thought about some inner turmoil. She didn't see it often, mostly when his step sister was around, but she definitely saw it. Which meant he was definitely hiding something. She only hoped it wasn't anything too bad.

"I'm undecided." She finally said with a shrug and he shook his head, smirking again.

"You're something else, Katherine."

"Why do you say that?" She asked.

"Because I come to this town expecting you to be the same girl I met all those years ago and you're clearly not. It's just surprising how much you've actually changed." He admitted and she raised an eyebrow.

"With all due respect...we only hung out for one day like 5 years ago."

"Yeah..." He had a thoughtful look on his face. "But it was enough."

"What was enough?"

"It was enough to get to know who you were as a person."

She looked at him thoughtfully and sighed, nodding. She had felt the same way for a long time.

"Well, you've changed too." She said. They both nodded in their agreement.

And so they finished their Halloween night together, finishing off their joint and getting back into the Camaro. Once he was parked outside of her house he leaned over to look at her through the passenger side window.

"You looked great tonight, by the way." He winked at her and she laughed.

"Flattery will get you everywhere, Hargrove." She said and he laughed too.

"And that dress will get you anywhere with *me*, Katherine."

She snorted and shook her head, waving as she made her way into her house, hoping her dad wasn't awake. She heard the Camaro's engine rev before he took off down the street to his own home. She plopped down on her bed once she saw her dad was actually in his room, sound asleep. She hadn't bothered counting how many bottles he'd had, instead she drifted off into a restful sleep. The first restful sleep she'd had since last year.

There you have it! Hope you all enjoyed this chapter, feedback is welcome but not forced, I will hopefully have the next chapter up soon, I really enjoy writing Katie and Billy together, also would anyone like a chapter from Billy's POV? Let me know! See you next time!

-Alyssa